

## Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /026 W

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R 301500Z JAN 75

FM AMEMBASSY CAIRO

TO AMEMBASSY SAIGON

INFO SECSTATE WASHDC 1793

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

S E C R E T CAIRO 1110

EXDIS

FOR AMBASSADOR MARTIN FROM AMBASSADOR EILTS

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: ICRC PARM VN EG SA VS

SUBJECT: EGYPTIAN POSITION AT LAW OF WAR  
CONFERENCE

REF: SAIGON 934 AND 1049

1. RAISED WITH FAHMY TODAY THE MATTER OF THE "PRG" ISSUE AT THE UPCOMING LAW OF WAR CONFERENCE. IN DOING SO, I TOLD HIM ABOUT BAC'S GREAT CONCERN AT EGYPT'S PERTINENT VOTE AT FIRST SESSION LAST YEAR. I RECALLED BAC HAD AGAINST GREAT ODDS SOUGHT AND OBTAINED THE APPROVAL OF A RELUCTANT PRESIDENT THIEU TO GRANT OVERFLIGHT RIGHTS TO EGYPT AIR. IT WOULD BE DEEPLY EMBARRASSING AND INDEED DAMAGING TO BAC IF EGYPT DOES NOT AT A MINIMUM NOW ABSTAIN ON THE "PRG" ISSUE WHEN IT ARISES. AMBASSADOR MARTIN, WHO EXPENDED SO MUCH EFFORT TO PERSUADE GVN TO GRANT OVERFLIGHT RIGHTS, WOULD ALSO FIND IT EMBARRASSING.

2. AS I SUSPECTED, FAHMY SAID HE CANNOT ABSTAIN. TO DO SO WILL REQUIRE A PRESIDENTIAL DECISION AND SADAT CONSIDERS HE HAS BEEN BADLY BURNED BY THE RECENT KHMER VOTE. IN THE PRESENT UNCERTAIN CIRCUMSTANCES, THE PRESIDENT WILL  
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NOT AGAIN WANT TO RISK SUCH EXPOSURE. NOR COULD FAHMY,

AS FONMIN, ADVISE HIM TO DO SO.

3. I REMINDED FAHMY THAT SAUDI ARABIS AND JORDAN ARE BOTH COMMITTED TO VOTE AGAINST "PRG". THUS, IF EGYPT COULD SEE ITS WAY CLEAR TO ABSTAINING, IT WOULD FIND ITSELF IN RESPECTABLE ARAB COMPANY. FAHMY REQUESTED THAT BOTH SAUDI ARABIS AND JORDAN RECOGNIZE GVN, EGYPT DOES NOT. AS HE HAD PREVIOUSLY TOLD ME, GOE MUST MOVE STEP-BY-STEP TO REGULARIZE ITS RELATIONS WITH GVN. IT CANNOT TAKE SO MAJOR A LEAP AT THIS TIME. HE EXPRESSED APPRECIATION FOR BAC'S EFFORTS IN OBTAINING OVERFLIGHT, BUT INSISTED MOST HE CAN DO IS NOT TO CO-SPONSOR PRG SEATING, WHICH HE RECALLED GOE HAD DONE LAST YEAR. GVN SHOULD UNDERSTAND, HE CONTENDED THAT THIS IS ALREADY A STEP FORWARD.

4. FAHMY RECOGNIZED EGYPTIAN POSITION COULD MEAN REVOCATION OF OVERFLIGHT RIGHTS OR THEIR NON-EXTENSION LATER THIS YEAR, BUT WAS RECONCILED TO HAVING TO TAKE THIS RISK. HE CLAIMED EGYPT AIR MAY IN ANY CASE HAVE TO CANCEL FAR EASTERN FLIGHTS AS UNECONOMIC.

5. COMMENT: HAVE DONE ALL I CAN TO URGE RECONSIDERATION OF GOE POSITION. AS INDICATED CAIRO'S 964, THE PRESIDENT IS SMARTING FROM CHORUS OF NON-ALIGNED REBUKES THAT HE RECEIVED FOR HIS ACTION RE KHMER VOTE. APRT FROM THIS, WITH GROMYKO COMING ON FEB 3, SAME DAY "PRG" ISSUE LIKELY TO ARISE, FAHMY IS OBVIOUSLY NOT ANXIOUS INCUR CRITICISM FROM THE VISITING SOVIET FONMIN FOR WHAT SOVIETS WILL CAST AS ACTING AT USG BEHEST. IF GVN DECIDED REVOKE OR NON-EXTEND, EGYPTIANS WILL SIMPLY HAVE TO TAKE THEIR MEDICINE. WOULD HOPE, HOWEVER, THAT BAC WILL UNDERSTAND FAHMY'S NEED TO MOVE SLOWLY IN REORIENTING EGYPTIAN POSITION.  
EILTS

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